

Dear Chairs Haskell and Elliot, Vice Chairs Turco and Flexer, Ranking Members Haines and Witkos, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee,

My name is Richard Cardoso. I am a resident of New Haven and a student at Yale University. I would like to express my strong support for HB 6374, An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses.

Both the campus climate survey requirement and amnesty policy requirements are necessary elements to ensure that our college campuses in Connecticut are correctly addressing cases of sexual violence.

Campus climate surveys serve as a platform for students to safely and anonymously share their experiences if wanted. This is especially important given low rates of reporting among individuals who are impacted by sexual violence. Similar requirements have already been enacted in Louisiana, Maryland, New York, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. The two-year frequency also ensures greater violence prevention measures, as well as an improved timeline and efficacy when approaching prevention measures and reform mechanisms. It is essential that universities and colleges evaluate their pre-existing campus culture every two years, rather than four, to capture inadequacies in real-time. Waiting four years to elicit much-needed data on the prevalence of violence, the accessibility and efficacy of resources, and other key facets of campus culture hurts ongoing attention and commitment to violence prevention.

Furthermore, the amnesty policy against drug/alcohol does not penalize students who were under the influence of alcohol or drugs when impacted by violence. This allows students to report without fear of being penalized. All students deserve the opportunity to report or share their experiences, without fear of being penalized or stigmatized. Amnesty policy sends a message against victim blaming. By not penalizing students who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of violence, schools send a message that no student is at fault or punishable for the violence that occurred against them -- no matter the circumstances.

I strongly support HB 6374, An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses, and urge you to favorably vote the bill out of the Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement.

Sincerely,

Richard Cardoso
New Haven, CT